1: Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1955 OC6 Iban OC6

and the width of the wall facing on to the *ruai* is some indication of the general social standing of the family that owns it. In Rumah Nyala, of the Sungai Sut, the smallest *bilek* was 12ft. 6ins. wide by 16ft. deep, while the largest was 23ft. wide by 17ft. 6ins. deep.

(*b*) The *sadau*. Above each *bilek*, and jutting out over the *ruai*, is the *sadau*, which is a kind of garret or loft. Here, in immense bark bins, is stored the grain (*padi*) grown by the members of the family. Also kept in the *sadau* are the various implements used in farming, and the mats, baskets and trays used when *padi* is being husked and winnowed.

(*c*) The *ruai*. The door of each family *bilek* opens on to another section of the apartment known as the *ruai*, and which—like the *bilek*—is the private property of the family to which it belongs. The *ruai* serves many purposes. Immediately adjacent to the wall dividing the *bilek* from the *ruai* is a section about three to four feet in width, known as the *tempuan lesong*. Here stands the *lesong*, a large wooden mortar, in which the women of the family pound their *padi* with long, hardwood poles, so to husk it. Adjoining this narrow strip comes another section, usually about 10 to 12 feet in width, and completely unobstructed by posts or partitions; it thus forms a corridor or gallery giving access to all parts of the long-house. It is, in fact, a kind of village street, and is used by all the members of the community as a general thoroughfare. Flanking this corridor or 'street' are the *padong ruai*, open, rectangular spaces, one of which belongs to each family apartment. These *padong ruai* are the main centres of community life and social intercourse. Like the *bilek*, of which it is an extension, each section of the *ruai* (composed of the three divisions just described) is owned by a single family. It is the duty of each family to keep its section of the corridor in good repair so that all may use it. But this general use involves no diminution of ownership rights; each family retains the right to cordon off its section of the *ruai* during the performance of certain rituals, and on other occasions to insist (on the pain of fine) that prohibitions governing its use be fully observed by all members of the long-house community. The boundaries of each family section of the *ruai* are clearly marked by the main supporting posts of the long-house structure.

(*d*) The *tanju*. Beyond the *ruai*, and so not covered by any form of roof, is the *tanju*, an open platform, usually about 20 to 25 feet wide. As with the corridor of the *ruai*, all the independently owned section of the *tanju* are joined to form an unbroken, raised platform, which fronts the whole long-house. The *tanju* is used for a wide variety of domestic tasks; in particular it is the place where *padi* is sunned prior to pounding.

4. It is the joining together of a number of different family apartments (each made up of a *bilek*, a *sadau*, a *ruai* and a *tanju*) that produces the attenuated structure known as a long-house. A long-house community is thus, in essence, a village consisting of a single 'street' of attached apartments. It is most important to realize, however, that each apartment is the private property of one family. Figure 2, depicts a typical Iban long-house, in this case, of ten family apartments. Let us now examine more closely the various family units of which a long-house community is composed, for these are the basic corporate groups of Iban social and economic life.

The Iban Bilek Family

5. In Government and other publications the family apartments of an Iban long-house are commonly referred to as 'doors.' A long-house, that is, is usually

1: Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1955 OC6 Iban OC6

175 were fixed by Government, beyond which no Iban settlement or farming was
167 permitted. It was one of the duties of the Pengulus to guard these points, and to report to Government any breach of the regulations. By October, 1923, about
648 95 long-house communities had re-occupied the Baleh and its tributaries.[1] Government regulations covering the authorized limits of Iban settlement were laid down, and—at the outset—strictly enforced. In January, 1924, for example, Pengulu Grinang reported that a group of Iban had entered Sungai Puru (a side stream of the Gat) in defiance of the regulations; in the following April, the long-house of these law-breakers was burnt down by the District Officer, Kapit, and a party of Rangers.[2]

Iban Rights in the Baleh Region

423 42. This leads us to the important point that none of the Baleh Iban (or, for
648 that matter, any of the Iban living north of the main Rejang river), possess prescriptive or truly traditional rights over their lands. The territory from the mouth of the Rejang to Kidurong Point was ceded to the First Rajah by the Sultan of Brunei, in 1861. Thus the whole of the Baleh region had passed into the hands of Government at least ten years before its first occupation by the leading Iban migrants from the Second Division. Furthermore, from the very commencement of Iban settlement in the Baleh there has been a Government station in the immediate area—the first fort having been established at Nanga Baleh in 1874. To-day, many Iban claim that they have traditional rights over Baleh land, saying that it has been handed down from their remote ancestors. Europeans unacquainted with the detailed history of the Kapit District are apt to be misled by this specious claim, and if Government policy in the area is to be properly implemented, it is of cardinal importance that the historical facts be fully established, and clearly understood by all.

167 43. All re-settlement in the Baleh was under Government supervision, each
621 long-house community having land formally apportioned to it. The period was
648 also marked by widespread re-organization of long-house communities. Those families which had remained faithful to the Rajah's authority were allowed to return to more favourable sites than those who had openly defied Government or tacitly supported the rebels. Consequently there was much re-grouping of families into new or different communities. In general then, the land tenure situation, and the present dispersal of long-houses in the Baleh area, are the direct outcome of the historical events we have been discussing. In other words they have been determined primarily by Government policy, and should not be viewed as being the spontaneous expression of tendencies inherent in Iban society.

167 44. When re-settlement took place each of the various long-house com-
621 munities was allotted a specified tract of land.[3] This tract usually bordered a
648 section of one of the main rivers or streams, and boundaries with neighbouring
423 long-houses were either tributary streams or well-defined ridges that demarcated a watershed. Re-occupation was en masse, for during the first year 95 communities (i.e. probably between 1,300 and 1,400 *bilek* families) established themselves in the Baleh and its side streams. Then, as now, there was no detailed

[1] "Sarawak Gazette," 1924, p. 22.
[2] "Sarawak Gazette," 1924, p. 93 and p. 198.
[3] "Sarawak Gazette," 1924, p. 22.

1: Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1955 OC6 Iban OC6

survey of the Baleh area, and although the allocation of territories was under general Governmental surveillance, there seems to have been no formal registration of titles. In the absence of a detailed survey, it is not possible to give accurate figures for the extent of the various long-house territories, but from those which I was able to inspect it seems that they ranged from about five to fifteen square miles.

Principles of Land Tenure among the Iban

45. As already noted the territory allotted to a long-house community is not held in communal ownership, but rather all the *bilek* families of the community have equal rights of access to the land. That is, these rights of access are held in common as against the members of all other long-houses. Actual family ownership is established by the felling of primary jungle (*kampong*), and this is always undertaken by individual *bilek* families. By clearing the virgin forest from a tract of land, a *bilek* family secures full discretionary rights over the secondary jungle (*damun*) which springs up within a few months of the first *padi* harvest, and thereafter, for as long as it remains in the local community, this *bilek* family retains ownership of all land, for the initial cultivation of which it has been responsible. Once land has been acquired in this way it becomes part of the general property of the *bilek*, and is inherited in the same way as are the other valuables of the family. That is, land is inherited by the *bilek* family as such, and all those who remain members of this local group possess parcenary rights in the land which it has acquired. Marrying out of one's natal group involves the relinquishment of these rights, and the assumption of similar interests in one's marital *bilek* family, these circumstances applying both to men and to women.

46. When the partition of a *bilek* family occurs, both sections retain the right to farm land acquired prior to this event. There is thus no formal partition of the land, as there is of the moveable effects of the *bilek*, but rather a joint sharing of rights of access to the secondary jungle that was once common property. The usufruct of this secondary jungle is decided in conference between the two sections of the *bilek* when the occasion arises. In course of time therefore, it is parcelled out for re-use, and in this way each part of the original *bilek* family establishes presumptive tenure of the *damun* land which it puts into cultivation for a second time. However, all virgin jungle felled by either section subsequent to partition is independently owned from the outset.

The Settlement of New Territory

47. When pioneering new territory it is customary for a group of *bilek* families (the number may vary from three or four to more than a dozen) to work side by side. This has many advantages; it means that animal pests are kept under better control, that there is opportunity for the formation of co-operative groups (based on the principle of reciprocity) which make easier the formidable task of felling several acres of primeval rain-forest, and that all the families concerned can live together in a single *dampa*, which, though smaller in scale, is constructed on exactly the same principles as a long-house. The Baleh country is very broken and extremely well watered, with innumerable side spurs rising abruptly to straggling and uneven ridges that vary from several hundred to a thousand feet and more in height. The usual pattern of exploitation is for a group of *bilek* families to begin in the lower reaches of a tributary stream. As far as possible, each *bilek* family selects a separate spur, and commencing at the foot moves up it until the crest of the ridge is reached. The average area of an Iban farm (*umai*) is

between four and five acres, and as it is usual to farm virgin land for two years in succession, a single spur will often keep a *bilek* family occupied for three or more years. Once jungle at the foot of a spur has been felled and farmed, the *bilek* family responsible has presumptive right over the unfelled, primary jungle higher up on the same slope. Land disputes are rare among the Baleh Iban, but of the several cases which did come to my attention, most were concerned with one family 'jumping' another's claim by moving on to the upper slopes of an already occupied spur. In each case the interloper was judged to be in the wrong, and compelled to withdraw.

48. In settling such disputes two main principles are recognized. First, stream beds—however small—are accepted as natural and sacrosant boundaries, and to cross one of these in the face of someone else's prior claim is to flout *adat*. This maxim was well put by Temenggong Koh, in an admonition (which I happened to overhear) to several of the men of his house: "If you quarrel over land," he said, "follow the streams for they were devised by the gods"; ("*Enti kita belaya ka tanah, niteh ka sungai, sigi gaga petara*"). And on several other occasions, I heard this same sanction evoked in the phrase: "The gods fashioned the valleys." ("*Gaga petara lebak*"). This basic principle accepted, the second is that the family whose previously farmed land is nearest to the disputed primary jungle, has prior rights of possession. Or, as the Iban put it: "Whosoever possesses the nearest *padi* stubble owns the land"; ("*Barang damping agi jerami, empu tanah*")[1]. It is by applying these two principles that disputes regarding primary jungle are usually settled.

49. When all of the virgin forest in the lower reaches of a stream has been exhausted, the group of *bilek* families concerned move on en masse towards its headwaters, to fell and farm the immediately adjacent tract of jungle; but once again each *bilek* family—operating as an independent unit—selects a separate spur as the scene of its activities. In this way, the basin of a stream is gradually worked out, so that when all of the virgin jungle has been felled, the whole area has come under the private ownership of a series of different *bilek* families. When this stage has been reached, everyone moves off to another stream to follow the same system, returning to the original site when the secondary jungle (*damun*) there is deemed to have grown to a sufficient size. This may be after a period of from ten to twenty or more years, depending on how much other land is available. Because of this system of gradual advance in groups, the various land-holdings of a *bilek* family are widely dispersed. Indeed, after a period of twenty years or so the territory of a long-house community, with its multiplicity of privately owned sections, resembles a gigantic chequer board. Each of these separate sections varies from about five to ten acres in extent, and seldom, if ever, does any one *bilek* family own more than a dozen acres in a single block. Instead, the individual farm sections of a *bilek* family are scattered piecemeal over the whole of the long-house territory. For example, in 1949, the *bilek* family of Pioh (one of the founders of the present Rumah Nyala), possessed a total of about 150 acres of secondary jungle, divided into some 24 different lots, scattered over an area of between four and five square miles, and situated on the banks of the Sungai Sut and in five of its minor tributaries.

50. The apportionment of virgin land is decided at a general palaver in which

[1] This maxim of customary law is from a judgement given by the late Pengulu Atan, when hearing a land dispute in the Sungai Sut.

1: Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1955 OC6 Iban OC6

50. The apportionment of virgin land is decided at a general palaver in which all of the senior male members (*tuai bilek*) of the families of the long-house participate. But before this is held most *bilek* families have taken some measure of independent action. As soon as the sowing of one year's crop has been completed, a *bilek* family begins to plan the whereabouts of its farm of the following season, and general farming arrangements are premeditated by about two or three years. On my arrival at Rumah Nyala in 1949, for example, the people announced to me that they intended to take two more crops from the area in which they were then farming, and then return to secondary jungle in the main valley of the Sut; and this in fact is what they did. The process of selecting virgin forest for felling is not, however, highly organized, but rather unplanned and casual, with each *bilek* family acting largely on its own initiative. As already explained, it is usual for a small group of *bilek* families to operate in the same immediate area. After sufficient consultation to ensure that the plans of others are not being wilfully contravened, a *bilek* family declares its intention of farming a certain area, by setting up on it a sign, or *pesindang*, which consists of a notched stick and a cross-piece.

At the same time a small area surrounding this *pesindang* is cleared of undergrowth. Once this has been achieved, every opportunity is taken to acquaint all the other members of the community with what has been done. Where possible the matter is brought up on some semi-formal occasion—such as after a *bedara*, or minor ritual offering, when most of the senior members of the community are assembled on the *ruai* of the long-house. In this way the arrangement receives public recognition. Instances of conflict are rare. Often there is a certain amount of 'jockeying' for position, but once a *bilek* family has established its *pesindang* at the foot of a spur, there is little chance of this fait accompli being abrogated; and thereafter, tenure is governed by the principles already enunciated. Thus several months before a new year's farming begins, the intentions of most of the *bilek* families of the community are generally known.

51. There is however, one occasion in particular for the public discussion of questions of land tenure. This is following the *matak ka burong* ritual (which usually falls sometime in May), when the augur (*tuai burong*) of the community distributes to all *bilek* families desiring them, omen sticks (*kayu burong*), to be used during the initial stages of the new agricultural cycle. As soon as this important ritual has been concluded, a discussion of precise plans for the coming year breaks out. The arrangements of most families are firmly settled by this time, but there are commonly several who have not reached a final decision. In particular, this is the time when requests for the use of another family's secondary jungle (*damun*) are made. All secondary jungle is privately owned by different families, but in most communities there is a certain amount of 'borrowing' and inter-change of *damun*. Thus a family may, for various reasons, want to remain for another year in an area in which its own holdings of secondary jungle are not quite adequate to its needs; in these circumstances, the usual course is to request (*minta*) the temporary use of an adjoining strip of *damun* belonging to someone else. Usually such requests are granted, but there is no change of tenure, only the taking of one season's crop. Reciprocity is the principle governing these transactions; and occasionally a simple inter-change of *damun* is arranged by two *bilek* families. It does sometimes happen however, that rent (*tase damun*) is charged for the usufruct of secondary jungle. But this is a rare occurrence; during my two years in the Baleh, I did not encounter a single instance of rent being paid for *damun*, and according to Iban informants, it

1: Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1955 OC6 Iban OC6

is understandable—if not excusable—that the Iban were prodigal of the primeval jungle. In Iban eyes, there was sufficient forest land to provide for untold future generations, and their whole policy was to exploit the stored-up fertility of virgin land by extracting from it two or three successive crops, and then to move on to fresh fields. It is also understandable that under these conditions, there was no very complex, or stringent system of land tenure. Land tenure becomes [423] a serious issue only when land is a relatively scarce, and consequently, a valued commodity. This situation has already been reached in many parts of Sarawak, and—as far as the Iban are concerned—notably in certain parts of the Second Division, where the virgin forest has for some years been completely exhausted. If Government succeeds in containing the Baleh Iban within their present limits, and if their population continues to increase, the whole land tenure situation will change. It therefore becomes important that Government should anticipate possible difficulties, by surveying and registering long-house territories, for only when this has been done will it be feasible to adjust the size of communities in relation to their available territories, and so attain a rational and stable cycle of cultivation.

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were successful. The Lugats were driven into the Anap, the Ukit into the Mahakam, and the Lesum, Badang and others, into the Apo Kayan or Baram. By the beginning of the present century, the Iban were unchallenged masters of the whole of the middle Rejang, and had not Government forcibly restrained them, they would have extended their influence even more widely.

1: Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1955 OC6 Iban OC6

of land usage are complex. There is however, one general feature of especial 311
significance: *a marked tendency (particularly when working virgin forest) to farm land for two years in succession, before letting it revert to secondary jungle.* I want to stress the prevalence of this practice from the outset, for it is of the greatest consequence that Government officers should be fully aware of its existence. In the past there seems to have been a general impression that after each harvest "a bush fallow period of from 12-15 years" was always observed before another crop was taken. When I first reported the existence of '*krukoh farming*' (i.e. the taking of two consecutive crops from the same piece of land), I was told, by officers of experience, that I was mistaken for it was well known that the Iban did not farm in this way. Yet, as we shall see, *krukoh* farming is a time-honoured Iban custom, which has had a most deleterious effect on hundreds of square miles of land—in the Third Division and many other parts of the territory of Sarawak.

The Predilection of the Iban for Virgin Jungle

265. Every land usage cycle begins with the felling of virgin jungle. During the past hundred years, many thousands of acres of primeval forest in the Rejang basin have been felled by Iban axes, and in the Baleh (and other similar pioneer areas) this onslaught is still going on. From the historical survey (presented in Part II of this report) of the Iban occupation of the Batang Rejang and its tributary rivers and streams, it emerges clearly that the Iban are a virile and resourceful people with an insatiable appetite for virgin land. The motives which prompt this appetite are many. Foremost is the knowledge that, given good weather, two and more crops of exceptional abundance may be harvested from an *umai kampong*. In their prayers (*sampi*) at the time of *pemanggol*, the Iban ask for: [782]

> "Land that is fat, fat in deep layers,
> Luxuriant land, land that is fruitful,
> Soil soft and fecund, land richly fertile;"

and they know that this is most likely to be found in tracts of *kampong*, on untouched slopes and terraces, where the humus of centuries lies thickly. The labour expended on an *umai kampong* is heavy, but it holds high promise of a surplus—a surplus that leads to property and prestige and all the other things most desired by Iban hearts.

266. By felling virgin forest a family obtains rights of ownership over land, 311
rights of usufruct over the secondary jungle which in due course springs up; and 423
by Iban *adat* these rights are permanently vested in the family and its heirs for as 556
long as they elect to exercise them. Among shifting cultivators like the Iban land is of pre-eminent importance. Land is wealth, and upon its land holdings depend the prosperity and indeed, the very subsistence of a *bilek* family. Under these conditions access to virgin territory is a prerogative of the utmost consequence, for it presents a family with the opportunity to expand its wealth and attain a position of economic security. There is no need to wonder at the "land-rush" which marked the opening of the rich forest lands of the Baleh to Iban settlement. The well-being of many an Iban family springs from the privileged position it gained in that scramble.

267. The cultivation of virgin jungle brings innumerable minor advantages. 311
Timber for building, for making canoes and a score of different implements, [313
rotan for mats and baskets, palm fronds for thatching, iron-wood for roof 314]
shingles, resin for lighting, bark for *padi* bins—all these things lie close at hand. Indeed, the whole material culture of the Iban is based on the rain-forest, and in

[See pp. 11-26, Cat. 116.—Analyst]

3: Low G-5 (1844-1847) 1848
OC6 Iban OC6

245 flavoured variety. Pine-apples are seldom cultivated by the Dyaks, though they are found apparently in a wild state about most of their villages; in such situations the fruit is small and of little flavour, and it is remarkable that the Dyaks, who delight in the cultivated ones from the Chinese gardens at Sarawak, should take no care of their own.

423 The ancestors of the Dyaks having for many centuries occupied the countries these people now inhabit, 245 fruit trees are scattered in abundance all over its surface, particularly near the banks of rivers, and all jungles abound with them. The most esteemed kinds surround their villages, and these, with other in easily accessible places, are individual property; but those of the jungles are not owned, and the fruit of them generally becomes the property of the squirrels, monkeys, and birds, which frequent the forests containing them, unless the destructive Malay should see them, who, ever thoughtless of the future, immediately cuts down with his hatchet a tree which has taken many years to attain its fruiting state, and for the purpose of gathering a few for himself, destroys what might at some future time be of service to the Dyaks or others, who might, for the purposes of mining or agriculture, be compelled to reside in the vicinity.

224 As the woods of the country of the sea-Dyaks abound in pigs and deer, and the tribes are not prevented by any superstitious prejudice from eating the flesh of either of these animals, various contrivances are in use for their

6: Freeman E-5 (1949-1951) 1958 OC6 Iban OC6

people are the descendants of migrants from the interior of the Second Division of Sarawak, and especially from the headwaters of the Batang Lupar. Travelling chiefly by way of the Katibas and Ngemah rivers, the first of these migrants reached the primeval forests of the Baleh in the early 1880's, but it was not until about forty years later, following serious conflict with the Brooke Government, that permanent Iban settlement was achieved [2]. Today the Baleh is an exclusively Iban area.

During the years—from 1949 to 1951—when my field research was undertaken [3], the Iban of the Baleh region were still little touched by the outside world. Their men, with long hair and bodies profusely tattooed, and their women, clad in ikat skirts of their own weaving, were all still pagan and pre-literate; and throughout the whole Baleh region, Iban culture—in all its extraordinary richness—was still a flourishing reality. In this essay then, we shall be concerned with the traditional ways of the Iban, ways which—because of the tolerant policies of the White Rajahs of Sarawak—have survived unscathed into the modern world.

THE IBAN LONG-HOUSE

All of the Iban of the Baleh region still live in long-houses. Architecturally there is nothing very remarkable about an Iban long-house, but many of them, out of sheer length, make an impressive spectacle. Rumah Tungku, for example, one of the long-houses selected for detailed discussion in this essay, extends in an uninterrupted line for more than a sixth of a mile. Standing on an elevated terrace, well beyond the reach of flood waters, and lifted high on score upon score of hardwood piles, it stretches—as do all Iban long-houses—along the bank of a river. Here and there, entry ladders of notched logs lead up like gangways to the *tanju*, an open platform that runs the entire length of the spindly structure and gives access to the public gallery and the family apartments beyond. Over both gallery and apartments a low-pitched roof of wooden shingles forms an unbroken expanse. At first glance the whole sprawling building seems like some huge barracks or pavilion.

Few long-houses have the dimensions of Rumah Tungku (sixty to a hundred yards is more common a length), but, casually regarded, all Iban long-houses do have the appearance of being compact architectural units, and this appearance has led some writers (Baring-Gould and Bampfylde 1909: 27) to the supposition that the long-house is therefore the outcome of some kind of communal or group organization and ownership. For the Iban, however, this supposition is very far from the truth.

Although the platform (*tanju*) and the gallery (*ruai*) of a long-house do extend without interruption throughout its entire length, an Iban long-house is, in fact, made up of a series of independently owned apartments, and

6: Freeman E-5 (1949-1951) 1958 OC6 Iban OC6

342 423 further, these apartments, although joined one to the other architecturally, are always the separate abodes of distinct and autonomous family groups. Indeed, the only parts of the whole long-house which are held in any sort of common ownership are the entry ladders; for the rest, every pile and every plank is privately owned by one of the community's component families. In a sense, then, the singular architecture of an Iban long-house is deceptive, for its gallery and its unbroken expanse of roof tend to cloak the fact that it is made up of a series of separate apartments, each of which is the property of a sovereign family group.

621 Among the various families which make up a long-house community there does always exist a network of relationships based on bilateral kinship. Thus, every family is always related cognatically to at least one of the other families of the community, usually to several, and quite often to many of them. However, it rarely, if ever, occurs that there is within a long-house community a degree of complete, or even nearly complete, inter-relatedness among its various family groups. Furthermore, an Iban long-house community is an open and not a closed group, for its component family groups are joined in free association from which withdrawal is always possible, and there is, indeed, a good deal of movement, year by year, from one long-house to another. As all this suggests, an Iban long-house community is a corporate group only in certain restricted ways. Thus a long-house community holds [423 476] virtually no property in common ownership, nor is there collective ownership of farm land; and again, there is an absence of any kind of economic activity by the long-house as a corporate group. However, membership of a long-house does impose upon each family group many common duties and obligations, for it is universally accepted that the well-being of any long-house is dependent upon its ritual state, and for the maintaining of this all are responsible. In jural matters also the long-house community is a corporate [622] entity, for all its family groups do place themselves under the jurisdiction of their *tuai rumah*, or house headman, whose principal duty is the safeguarding and administering of the customary law, or *adat*.

121 As these summary remarks suggest, the Iban long-house community, as such, presents a number of sociological problems of extraordinary interest. These problems I hope, in due time, to discuss, but in the present essay our attention will be confined to the independent family cells of which every long-house community is composed. Of these it may be claimed that they are the intrinsic and irreducible corporate groups of Iban society, and certainly, an understanding of them is an essential preliminary to the study of the wider structure of Iban society.

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

their pestles in quick succession at one mortar. In this way the grain is freed from husk, and is made ready for food.

Each family farms its own piece of land. Much of such work as cutting down the jungle and planting is done by a combination of labour, several families agreeing to work for each other in turn. By this means all the planting on the land belonging to a particular family is done in one day, and all the grain ripens at the same time.

When the Dyaks wish to abandon an old habitation in favour of a new one, a general meeting of the inhabitants is held to consider the matter, and the desirability of building a new house is fully discussed. Sometimes it happens that some families do not agree with the wishes of the majority, and these families split off and join another house. If a move be decided on, a few experienced men are deputed to choose a site, and to report on its adaptability. There are several matters to be taken into account. The site must be for preference on rising ground, and be near a good supply of water. There must also be some jungle near, where the inmates can get their firewood, and there must be large tracts of land not far away where they can plant their paddy.

When the new house has to be built on the low-lying, marshy ground in the lower reaches of the river, the choice is not difficult. All that is necessary is to choose a part of the river where the current is not very strong. But in the hill country it is not easy to find a site where the ground is fairly level, and can accommodate a large house of thirty or forty families.

Before building on the chosen site the omen birds are consulted. If the omens be favourable, all the men and

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

to buy it. "A" and "B" seemed to be quite strangers to one another. "A" examined the jar "B" had brought, and then said: "My jar is not a good one; I admit that. But this is a genuine old jar, and worth the eighty dollars he asks for it. I have not got much money with me; but if anyone here will lend me the money, I am quite prepared to pay eighty dollars for it." As "A" was well known, the headman of the house lent him the sum of money he required to enable him to buy the jar. The money was paid to "B," who went off. Then "A" began to boast about his bargain; he dwelt on all the good points of the jar, and told the Dyaks that they were very foolish to have let such a chance slip. He praised the jar so much that the headman of the house said he would buy it from him for the same price as he paid for it. "A" said he did not want to part with it, as it was a genuine old jar, and honestly worth much more than he gave for it. After some discussion "A" agreed to sell it to the Dyak for one hundred dollars, and so he made a profit of twenty dollars in a very short time.

It was found out afterwards that "B" was living with "A" during his stay in Krian! The jar was considered by experts to be a modern imitation and comparatively worthless. When "A" was spoken to about the matter, he persisted in saying that in his opinion the jar was a genuine old one, but that he might be mistaken.

With regard to land, it has been the immemorial custom of the Dyaks that when a person fells the virgin forest he acquires by that act a perpetual title to the land. He may sell it, lend it, let it, or leave it to his successor. The rent he is supposed to demand for a piece of land large enough to be farmed by one man is one dollar. If, however, he is not paid in money, he may claim a game-cock, or two

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

plates. As a gamecock or two plates cost about a quarter of a dollar, it is dearer to pay for the use of land with money. Land disputes are very common among Dyaks. As they often leave a particular district, and then return again after many years, it is not surprising that complications arise.

Fruit-trees are owned by the people who plant them. The different families in a Dyak house plant fruit-trees near their part of the house. When they leave the spot and build a new habitation elsewhere, they each still claim ownership of the trees they planted. The rule with regard to fruit-trees is that anyone may take the ripe fruit that has fallen, but only the owner or someone deputed by him may climb the tree. Banting Hill, where I lived for some years, was covered with fruit-trees (*durian*), and at night during the fruit season crowds of men and boys would watch for the falling of the ripe fruit. They would each have a torch made of the bark of some tree, and they would sit and wait with the torch smouldering by their side. As soon as a ripe *durian* fruit was heard to fall, they would wave their torches in the air to make them flare up into a flame, and they would rush to the spot, and the person who found the fruit would take possession of it.

Slavery exists among the Dyaks, but not to any great extent. There are two classes of slaves—captives in war, and slaves for debt.

The Sea Dyaks when on the warpath spare neither man, women, nor children, but it occasionally happens that when they are able to do so, they carry little children back with them as captives. There are not many slaves to be met with among the Sea Dyaks, and these do not seem to be hardly treated. The slaves are not distinguishable

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

to the losing champion, so he comes off very poorly indeed.

There are certain cases where diving seems to be the only means of a satisfactory decision. Take the case of the ownership of a *durian* tree. The tree probably does not bear fruit till fifteen years after it has been planted. Up to that time no one pays any attention to it. When the tree begins to bear fruit two or three lay claim to it. The man who originally planted it is probably dead, and no one knows for certain whom the tree belongs to. In a case like this, no amount of discussion can lead to a satisfactory decision, whereas a diving contest settles the matter to the satisfaction of all parties.

The Dyaks have great faith in the Diving Ordeal, and believe that the gods will always maintain right by making the man who is in the wrong be the loser. In fact, if a Dyak refuses the challenge of a Diving Ordeal, it is equivalent to his admitting that he is in the wrong.

Among the Dyaks of the Batang Lupar diving contests are frequent. Champions are poorly paid for diving, and the losing diver receives nothing at all. Little or nothing is staked, and there is not much attached to the winning or losing of a case except the property in dispute. If the diving contest be about a fruit-tree, the winner becomes the owner of the tree, and the loser is not allowed to make any further claim. In the villages on the Krian River, however, the ordeal by diving is rarely resorted to, and when a diving contest does take place, the stakes are very high indeed.

A remarkable dispute was decided in Krian many years ago. I was told of it by the son of the man who won the case. A girl put out in the sun a petticoat she had woven. It was stolen. Some months after she saw a girl wearing

10: Sandin I-5 (1949-1955) 1956 OC6 Iban OC6

A year later Rinda gave birth to her eldest male child followed by four more (cf. Genealogy II):

Rinda (*f*) X Demong..... Kalanang, Kelimbang,
(Dayak) (Bukitan) Bundak, Jawai (*f*),
and Bakak.

Unfortunately, Jawai, Demong's only daughter, died when she was about fifteen years of age. But, because she was of noble birth, her body was *not* buried in the ordinary Sea Dayak way (in the ground). Instead the corpse was respectfully kept in a coffin. This coffin was not buried, but closed and put on a platform raised about six feet from the ground, to await the decomposition of the flesh. This method of preserving the dead of the noble families, as well as the place of preserving them, was known as *lumbong*. The site of Jawai's *lumbong* is still known, though such practices nowadays have been abandoned, just as their orginators, the Bukitans, have disappeared.

* * * * *

Turn to Tindin again. He came with his Dayak followers by boat from Skrang to Paku. On his arrival he first settled at a place called Penggan, afterwards moved to Melanyut Cape, where he died of old age and was greatly mourned by both the Sea Dayaks and the Bukitans.

After Tindin's death his people multiplied rapidly, while on the other hand the Bukitans decreased—partly because of the regular epidemics and partly due to Dayak migration from upper Paku towards Julau and upper Rejang by Entigu and his followers.

Tindin's daughter, Rinda, died soon after giving birth to her last child, Bakak. Later Demong remarried. This time he married a Bukitan woman, named Lemia, from whom he had many children. These children afterwards all married women of their mother's race.

Demong was by now an aged man and knew that the time would soon come when he had to die, leaving all his children on their own. Being a man of foresight, he made a plan to safeguard both the interests of all the children by the first wife and those of the second wife. To carry this out he erected a stone at a

10: Sandin I-5 (1949-1955) 1956 OC6 Iban OC6

place not far from the mouth of Awas, in upper Krian River. This erected stone served, through Demong's personal ruling, as a boundary for his children by the first wife and the other children by the second wife—that is, all the children begot by the first wife would own the old land lying from the Paku River and lower Krian as far as the erected stone only; and all the children begot by the second wife would own the new land lying from that stone towards the Julau and Rejang Rivers. However, the first group was allowed to pass beyond the stone; and second group was not allowed to turn back towards the old lands behind that stone.

This stone, which was erected by Demong a few hundred years ago, is still intact. And strange as it was, Demong's ruling about the division of land among his children is still followed up to the present generation. People from Paku and lower Krian have gone over to the Rejang; but not one from the Rejang has ever returned to that former land.

* * * * *

After the death of Demong, all the children of his first wife, except Bakak, lived and multiplied in the Paku. Bakak, in his young days, wandered to Batang Ai, where he married and later died (of old age).

There were scores of notable Sea Dayak leaders who came to live in Layar, Padeh, Paku and Rimbas after the death of Tindin. They were Temegoh of Bangkit, Talap of Pasa, Duau of Luban, Gerijeh of Padeh, Patinggi Ngadan of Layar. Jenua of Pusa, Padang of Undai and some others. The names of all these leaders survive in songs and genealogies.

* * * * * *

The migration to Krian was comparatively recent. It took place about 1800 A.D. by the Saribas Dayaks. Early in 1956 the collector of this data travelled to Kelaka, to find out from various people there the history of that river.

Linggi anak Nyanggau of Kemidan, Awik, Saratok, made the following statement:

342 a singular variety of inherited rice—which is the centre of the elaborate fertility cult upon which Iban agriculture is based. Also in the *sadau* are kept the various implements used in farming,
251 and the mats, baskets and trays used when *padi* is being husked and winnowed.

The ruai.

342 6. The door of each family *bilek* opens on to another section known as the *ruai*, which is always of about the same area as the *bilek*, and which—like the *bilek*—is the private property of the family to which it belongs. In an Iban house of traditional design, the division between the *bilek* and the *ruai* is marked by the main supporting post (*tiang bumbong*) of the ridge-pole; thus the rear half of the ridged roof covers the *bilek* while the front half covers the *ruai*. Unlike the *bilek*, a family's *ruai* has no side walls, so that all these independently owned sections are joined to produce a continuous, roofed gallery, which runs the entire length of the long-house. Throughout its length the *ruai* maintains a fairly constant width. In Rumah Nyala, for example, the average width of the *ruai* was about 23ft., while in Rumah Tungku it was 25ft. The *ruai* serves many purposes. Three principal parts may be distinguished. Immediately adjacent to the wall dividing the *bilek* from the *ruai*, is a section about three to four feet in width, known as the *tempuan lesong*.
252 Here stands the *lesong*, a large wooden mortar, in which the women of the family pound their *padi* with long hard-wood poles, so to husk it. Most of these *padi* mortars are fitted with sounding boards which, vibrating in time to the pounding poles, send a lively, staccato rhythm reverberating through the surrounding hills. Here also, in the *tempuan lesong*, firewood is stacked, and fighting cocks are tethered.

342 7. Adjoining this narrow strip comes another section, usually about 10 to 12 feet in width, and completely unobstructed by posts or partitions; it thus forms a common corridor giving access to all parts of the long-house. It is, in fact, a kind of village street, and except on ritual occasions when a family may cordon off its own particular portion, it is used by all the members of the community as a kind of general thoroughfare. The flooring of this corridor section is usually made from bamboo slats, which are springy to the tread. The *ruai* also serves many other purposes in addition to those of a street. It is the site of many domestic occupations; it is here, for example, that women suspend the frames on which to process their cotton (*nyikat ubong*), and later, set up their weaving looms. When religious rituals (*gawai*) are held, the *ruai* is the place where the all-important shrines (*ranyai*) are erected, and it is also the pathway for ceremonial processions (*niti daun* and *ngerandang*), and the invocation of the gods (*timang*). Here too, the spirit mediums (*manang*) perform their principal rites, and here the bodies of the dead are laid during the period of public mourning and ritual wailing which precedes burial.

8. One side of this corridor or 'street' is flanked by the entrances to the various *bilek*, or family rooms, and on the other it is skirted by a series of open spaces which extend to a low wall right under the eaves of the long-house roof. Each family possesses one of these open rectangular spaces, known as *padong ruai*. Varying in width in accordance with the *bilek* of which it is an extension, but always having a regular depth—usually about eight to ten feet—the *padong ruai* is one of the most important parts of the long-house. Floored with adzed, wooden planks, and furnished with huge *rotan* mats, it is the place where the people of the house, and particularly the men, spend most of their leisure time. The various *padong ruai* of a long-house are the main centres of community life and social intercourse. Here meetings (*baum*) are held, and disputes formally heard and settled. Here guests are welcomed with tobacco and betel, and offerings to the gods preformed. The cool and convivial *ruai* is also the site for many minor tasks: the place where nets are knotted, knife handles and sheaths carved, mats plaited, and cotton tied ready for
[32] dyeing. At nights it is the place where the men gather in informal groups to talk about their *padi* farms (a perennial topic of conversation), to discuss an omen or a dream, or merely to gossip,
[638] avidly and aimlessly. It is on the *ruai* too, and in the evenings, that the enthralling sagas (*enseru*)
[673] of the Iban are chanted and recited—sagas which tell of the fantastic adventures and miraculous feats of their culture heroes, the Orang Panggau. By young and unmarried men, the *padong ruai*
[718] is commonly used—despite the prowling dogs—as a sleeping place, and sometimes they construct for themselves, at the very edge of the *ruai*, and under the eaves of the roof, special bunk-like enclosures, termed *agu*. The line between the corridor and the *padong ruai* is marked by a row of secondary supporting posts, which also stand at the edge of the projecting *sadau*, or loft. Close to these posts, and in tangled, smoke-blackened clusters, hang the highly prized heads, or *antu pala*,
[354] with which so many of the most cherished values and beliefs of the Iban are associated. Beneath each such cluster of heads is a hearth (*bedilang*) of stone or clay, on which fires are kindled—both on chilly nights, and during certain head-hunting rituals. It is important to note that these heads (*antu pala*) are always the property of one particular family, and are never owned by the long-house group as a whole.

● 1423 9. Like the *bilek*, of which it is an extension, each section of the *ruai* (composed of the three divisions just described) is owned by a particular family. It is the duty of each family to keep its section of the corridor or long-house 'street' in good repair so that all may use it. But this
342 general use involves no diminution of ownership rights; each family retains the right to cordon off its section of the *ruai* during the performance of certain rituals, and on other occasions to insist (on the pain of fine) that prohibitions governing its use be fully observed by all members of the long-house community. The boundaries of each family section of the *ruai* are clearly marked by the main supporting posts of the long-house structure, but quite often dwarf walls (12 to 18 inches in height) are erected on the *padong ruai*. These plank partitions, which make convenient back rests, further demarcate the various family sections.

The tanju.

10. Beyond the *ruai*, and so not covered by any form of roof, is the *tanju*, an open platform,
342 usually about 20 to 25 feet wide. As with the corridor of the *ruai*, all the independently owned sections of the *tanju* are joined to form an unbroken, raised platform, which fronts the whole

621 612 592 of the *bilek-families* of Rumah Nyala fell into this category. The situation can be summed up by saying that the framework of Iban social organization at the level of the local community is *bilateral kinship*, and that a *bilek-family* is free to join any long-house containing cognatic kin of either husband or wife. This, it should be noted, is a different principle from that which operates within the *bilek-family* itself. A child is always a member of either its father's or its mother's natal *bilek*, depending on whether its parents practise virilocal or uxorilocal marriage; but it can never be a member of both their *bileks*, always one or the other. This means that *bilek* membership, inheritance, etc. is always through either a female or a male link, and it is this system that we have termed *ambilateral filiation*. Further, a child only leaves the *bilek* in which it has grown up, to be adopted, or to marry into some other family; we may say, therefore, that within the *bilek-family*, filiation is ambilateral and permanent—the only exceptions being adoption and marriage. The principles governing long-house organization are quite different however, and cannot be properly described as ambilateral. Instead they are based on bilateral kinship, and a recognition that cognatic ties, whether traced through mother or father, are of equal value. Either, or both, may determine the local community in which a *bilek-family* resides, and *bilek-families* are perfectly free to move from one long-house to another within any of the kindreds to which they belong.

621 166 133. Occasionally, because of quarrelling, bad omens, or persistently poor harvests, a long-house will break up, and its constituent *bilek-families* disperse to several different destinations. During the year 1949, two such cases occurred in the Sungai Sut, the houses concerned being Rumah Kubu (of 11 *bileks*), and Rumah Angkau (of 15 *bileks*). Listed below are the destinations to which their various *bilek-families* dispersed.

A. *Rumah Kubu, of Sungai Sut.*

Number of bileks.	*Destination.*
4	Rumah Sipang, Ulu Merirai,
2	Rumah Anye, Sungai Mujong,
2	Rumah Nyala, Sungai Sut,
1	Rumah Suntong, Sungai Merirai,
1	Rumah Sebau, Nanga Baleh,
1	Rumah Ubong, Sungai Poi.

B. *Rumah Angkau, of Sungai Bena (a tributary of S. Sut).*

Number of bileks.	*Destination.*
6	Sungai Ensulai, below Kapit,
1	Sungai Merirai,
1	Sungai Menuan, below Kapit,
1	Rumah Unyong, Sungai Bena,
6	*remained at* Rumah Angkau, Sungai Bena.

In the case of Rumah Angkau, it will be noted that nine *bileks* (out of a total of 15) dispersed to four different destinations, leaving six families at the original site. Rumah Kubu presents an even more striking example however, for here the site (which had been occupied since about 1932), was entirely abandoned, and the 11 *bilek-families* dispersed to six widely scattered destinations. Sungai Poi is distant more than 100 river miles, from Rumah Sipang, a pioneer community in the head-waters of the Merirai. We are here confronted then, with the complete disintegration of a long-house community, its constituent *bilek-families* terminating their association, and separating to merge with other already established communities. Moreover, each *bilek-family* joined a community in which there were already kinsfolk of one of its members. This is further evidence of the remarkably wide area over which kindred ties ramify. But most importantly, these examples of community disintegration demonstrate with clarity, the fundamental nature of the Iban long-house community, showing that it is a free and conditional association of corporate family groups. In other words, being part of a long-house does not deprive a *bilek-family* of its essential autonomy. In Iban social organisation, there is no principle of more vital consequence.

The Long-House Community as Corporate Group.

621 134. From the analysis so far, we can say that a long-house community is a serial aggregation of *bilek-families*, confederated by cognatic kinship. Moreover, it is an open, and not a closed group, for *bilek-families* are entitled to leave and join at will (subject, of course, to Government regulations). To what extent then is the long-house community as a whole, a corporate group? This is a difficult question to answer in general terms, but it may be observed, from the outset, that the degree of corporateness is low, and that inasmuch as it does exist it stems from ritual concepts, rather than from collective ownership of land or property. Let us first deal with these two last categories.

621 311 ● 423 135. Until fairly recent times, land in the Kapit District, has been a commodity in virtually unrestricted supply. When an Iban community had felled all the virgin jungle of the area in which it was living, it simply moved on to another territory, where there was fresh forest land to be exploited. Under these conditions land was not a highly valued commodity, for on all sides there lay vast tracts of unpeopled, primeval jungle, awaiting the onslaught of axe and fire. But with

the advent of Government control, the situation is changing, for the Iban are now hemmed in by boundaries beyond which slash and burn cultivation is not permitted. In the Baleh area however, a plentiful supply of land still exists, and there is, as yet, no real pressure upon the recently erected boundaries. The re-settlement of the Baleh in 1922 was under general Governmental surveillance, and each long-house community was allotted a roughly defined territory bordering the banks of the main river, or one of its tributaries. But the re-occupation was en masse, by scores of different long-house communities, and there was no system of survey, or legal registration.

136. Territories seem to have range from about five to fifteen square miles, according to the size of the community, and the most favourable sites, at the heads of the rivers, were granted to those who had remained faithful to the Brooke regime during the years of disaffection and rebellion. However, the allotment of a territory did not mean that the members of the community concerned held this land in collective, or communal ownership. What it did mean was that all *bilek-families* had *equal access* to the land. Among the Iban, ownership of land is established by the felling of primary jungle. Thereafter, the land belongs to the *bilek-family* responsible for this first felling, and it has full discretionary rights over the usufruct of the secondary jungle which springs up within a few months of the harvest. These rights are not in perpetuity however. Should a *bilek-family* migrate to another district and take up permanent residence there, its former land rights lapse; they may be assumed by remaining kindred, or if the entire community migrates, simply abandoned.

137. A pioneer community begins then, as a group having common and equal rights of access to a specified tract of virgin forest; year by year its component *bilek-families* establish ownership over different sections of this territory, until finally all of the land is privately owned. At the same time fruit-trees are being planted, and, in some areas, rubber plantations established; these too are privately owned by the *bilek-families* that plant and rear them. A long-house community consists therefore, of a series of *bilek-families* all of which hold in private ownership areas of secondary jungle, fruit trees, and sometimes, rubber plantations, within the confines of a compact territory. This much the *bilek-families* of a long-house do have in common, but farming land is never held in collective ownership.

138. Nor, among the Iban, is there anything resembling a village green (such as the *marae* of Polynesia), which belongs to the community as a whole. Privately owned land approaches to within a few feet of the long-house structure. The only exception is the burial ground, or *pendam*. This invariably consists of a spur rising from the river, on the banks of which the long-house is situated, for corpses are always carried by canoe. The jungle on the chosen spur is left in its primeval state, and never entered except for burials and on ritual occasions. Here, all *bilek-families* inter their dead, and throughout the undergrowth (for graves are left untended) are scattered jars, gongs, and many other kinds of burial property, which constitute the last inheritance of the dead. A burial ground falls into the same category as virgin jungle, over it there are no rights of ownership, but to it all *bilek-families* have full and equal rights of access. Occasionally it happens that two neighbouring long-houses share the same *pendam*, but in general, each community has its own site, where the bodies of those who once lived together lie buried.

139. We have seen that among the Iban the *bilek-family* is the basic land-owning group. This also applies to all other forms of property. Thus the long-house structure itself is made up of a series of separate apartments, each of which is privately owned. The only exception is the *tangga*—a huge log of hardwood, adzed to shape and deeply notched at regular intervals to form a ladder by way of which entry may be gained to the elevated *tanju* of the long-house. Often, they are about 20 feet in length, and weigh hundreds of pounds; sometimes, several *tangga*, connected by small stagings, are required. In the Baleh, *tangga* always lead on to the open *tanju*—either in the front of the house, or at the ends. They are spaced out at even intervals, and in most long-houses there is one entrance to about every seven *bileks*. In Rumah Nyala, for example, with 22 actual apartments, there were three entrances (c.f. Figure 2), while Rumah Tungku, with 45 apartments, had eight, and Rumah Sibat, with 29 apartments, four entrances.

140. The making of a *tangga*, transporting it back to the long-house, and then erecting it, complete with railings, is no light task. Usually it is undertaken by the men of the small group of *bilek-families*, whose regular way of entry it will become. But if it be the main *tangga* of the long-house (i.e. the first entrance to be constructed by the founding families), all the men of the long-house join in the work. This is mainly for ritual reasons. The main *tangga* is looked upon as a kind of portal connecting the long-house with the outside world; by this route both good and evil may come to the inhabitants, but by proper ritual performances, it is possible, say the Iban, to consecrate the *tangga* so that it will become a ladder by way of which riches and good fortune are carried up into their house. Understandably, all *bilek-families* are eager to join in the ceremony, and enjoy the benefits it brings. In the full scale rites, various of the gods (*petara*) are summoned, in a chanted invocation (*timang*), to visit the long-house, and on their arrival, offerings are made and sacrifices performed. In the *timang* the attributes and the actions of the gods are described. With them they have brought a marvellous *tangga*, which has the power to attract to the long-house all that men desire. It cannot be seen, of course, for it is in the form of soul-stuff, but as the gods erect it, the Iban put their newly hewn *tangga* in place, and the substances of the two become magically fused. Further offerings and sacrifices are made, prayers of consecration uttered, and the ceremony is concluded. Such a *gawai tangga* is usually organized by the *tuai burong* (augur), but the materials used in the offerings (e.g. *tuak*, eggs, rice, etc.) are supplied in equal proportions by all the *bilek-families* of the long-house. It is thus a corporate rite, involving the whole community, and the *tangga* is the common property of all those who participated.

141. A *tangga*, such as this, is the only object which can be properly regarded as belonging to the long-house as a whole. This was a topic which I frequently discussed with the Iban, asking them if there was any other kind of property which could be regarded as belonging to the long-house as a whole, and which had resulted from the co-operation of all its members. Always the answer was the same: only the main *tangga* fell into this category, and my own observations brought me to the same conclusion. After a *tangga* has been erected, its upkeep becomes a general duty, but within a few years, the rites which accompanied its erection fade in the memory, and responsibilities are neglected or evaded. At Rumah Nyala, the main *tangga* provided me with an excellent opportunity to observe Iban responses to corporate obligations. On several occasions it fell into serious disrepair. The usual trouble was the collapse of the side railings, making the slippery, notched log that remained, dangerous for young children. A few days after this had happened, Nyala, the *tuai rumah*, would parade up and down the long-house, announcing the damage obvious to all, and striving to round up a group of helpers. But his exhortations never met with any sort of general response; sometimes one or two unoccupied men would offer their assistance, but more often things would drag on for several days, until Nyala himself would gather the necessary *rotan* lashings, and make good the damage with his own hands.

Co-operation in Economic Affairs.

142. The Iban economic system is based on the cultivation of hill *padi*, but here again, there is never co-operation involving the whole community. Each *bilek-family* is self-sufficient economically, managing its own farm as an independent unit. Between small groups of *bilek-families*—especially in felling, dibbling, sowing and weeding—co-operation is customary, but rules of exact reciprocity are very strictly adhered to by all participants. It is, in fact, a system of labour exchange. There is only one phase of the agricultural cycle that is likely to concern the whole long-house: the firing of the farms. If farms adjoin one another, no one of them may be fired until a general conference (*baum*) has been held. This is to avert the danger of fire spreading without warning, and possibly leading to loss of life, or serious ritual offences like the burning of another family's *batu umai* (*whet-stone*). With this one exception, farms are freely managed as individual family ventures.

143. Hunting and fishing rights, which are very loosely defined, extend over the whole of the long-house territory, and occasional excursions into the territories of neighbouring communities are not objected to under Iban custom. In small long-houses, large animals, such as deer and pigs, are usually shared among all *bilek-families*, but here again, the principle is one of reciprocity, and all catches are expected to be shared out in the same way. In larger long-houses, the reciprocal groups is usually limited to about half-a-dozen neighbouring *biliks* of closely related kin. Brief mention may also be made of *tuba* fishing, which involves the co-operation of a large number of *bilek-families*. The method followed is to construct a dam (*impang*) across a slow flowing part of a river—a task in which all the men join: then all those participating—men, women and children—foregather at a chosen spot a mile or two upstream, each *bilek-family* bringing a bundle of *tuba* (Derris alleptica) roots. After the necessary rituals have been performed, the roots are pounded up, and their poisonous juices gathered in canoes which have been half filled with water. This done, the milky fluid that results is all at once emptied into the river, and after an interval of about ten minutes, the whole party paddles off helter-skelter to net and spear the stunned and poisoned fish. Sometimes the whole community will join in the fishing, but participation is in no sense obligatory, and on most occasions it is usual to find persons from neighbouring long-houses also present. Moreover, although all *bilek-families* co-operate in providing the large quantity of *tuba* roots that is needed, there is, once the actual fishing begins, completely open and untrammelled competition. During *tuba* fishing, say the Iban, kinship ties are forgotten. Each *bilek*-family retains the fish which its members succeed in taking, and there is absolutely no attempt to divide up the total catch in equal proportions.

144. We may say then, that with the not very important exception of the *tangga*, the Iban long-house community holds no property in common ownership, nor is there any collective ownership of land. Again, in the economic sphere there is an absence of any kind of productive activity by the long-house as a whole.

The Position of Tuai Rumah.

145. In every Iban long-house there are two offices of great importance—one secular and the other ritual. They are the positions of *tuai rumah* and *tuai burong*. In most long-houses they are held by different individuals, but it is perfectly permissible for one man to hold both offices, and in some communities this does happen. Neither position is ever held by a woman. (*c.f.* Footnote No. 22). When used as an adjective, the word *tuai* means old, or mature, but as a noun it refers to any senior and influential member of a community. Here, the emphasis is not primarily on age, but on the personal qualities of the individual concerned. Thus, a party of young men setting off on an expedition (*berjalai*), to gather jungle produce, always has its leader, or *tuai*, though he may be no more than in his early twenties. And in long-house communities, able, though only middle-aged men often come to exert very considerable authority and influence. In all contemporary long-houses however, there is one man who holds the title of *tuai rumah*, or house headman.

146. Since the pacification of the Iban and the establishment of European government, the position of *tuai rumah* has undergone several important changes. To-day, a *tuai rumah* is looked upon as an intermediary between his long-house and the administrative system. The Government accepts him as the representative of his community, and often he is made responsible for the implementing of its policies. Again, he has been empowered to settle disputes within the jurisdiction of his own long-house. (In the Third Division, "a *tuai rumah* may investigate but shall not try any case the maximum penalty for which exceeds six *mungkuls* under penalty of a fine of one pikul all to Government").[31] This means that the ultimate sanction of a *tuai rumah's*

(31) "Sea Dayak (Iban) Fines, Third Division," Kuching, 1940.

17:Bedford D-5 (1958) 1959 OC6 Iban OC6
Rumah Bujak

During the occupation the Japanese cut a channel through the narrow waist of a *tanjong* downriver from Simanggang. As a consequence water was diverted from a large loop of the river which dried out leaving an area of very fertile padi land. The people of Rumah Bujak settled on this land in 1943.

After the occupation disputes arose regarding right of tenure of land on which the people of Rumah Bujak had settled. Several legal actions arose, as a result of which the people of Rumah Bujak were allowed to remain where they were. They also retain the rubber gardens at the site of their old house at Sungai Pinggai.

The present house was built in 1946. Several *langkaus* (temporary dwellings) were built alongside the house in 1955.

The original house built at Pruan contained 19 doors. Since its completion 11 *langkaus* have been built at the ends of the original longhouse.

The population of the longhouse was 169 at the start of the investigation. During the period of investigation there were five births and one death. The death was that of a monster shortly after birth, following a pregnancy complicated by hydramnios.

The house is built on low-lying tidal swamp. On two or three days each month the ground under and about the house is flooded at high tide. The rooms are small, dark and hot. Some are kept moderately clean but some are very dirty. The majority of rooms have separate kitchens.

Animals and poultry are reared under the house. The ground underneath and around the house is liberally strewn with rubbish of all descriptions. There is no formal system of sewage disposal. The occupants of the house defaecate and micturate through holes in the verandah and at the rear of the rooms in the time honoured fashion. Faeces are devoured by pigs and poultry.

Agriculture

The people of Rumah Bujak own extremely fertile swamp padi land. They grow sufficient rice for their own needs and

314 "a good nut-year is a great event in Sarawak and provides a literal windfall for the native tribes,"

[439] and, it should be added, for the Chinese shopkeepers, for the "windfall" quickly ends up with the Chinese merchants who have staked the illipe nut gatherers and collect their loans, or purchase the nuts while selling outboard motors, sewing machines, gold and other valuables to the Ibans.[12]

[423] [439] Sarawak abounds in fruits, and the trees are held under customary rights. Ibans and other indigenous groups collect the fruits when they bear, and either sell them to Chinese hawkers or bring them to town to sell. We will give more attention to this in Chapter Four.

2. Rubber

175 177 249 Para rubber (Hevea brasiliensis) was first introduced into Sarawak in 1882 when Bishop Charles Hose planted one seedling in Kuching.

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314 243 [12]The relative abundance of forest products and especially illipe nuts when they are bearing has been a significant factor in the casualness with which many indigenese approach rice-cultivation. Prior to the planting of rubber and pepper in this District, men took off to collect jungle produce in the period between planting and harvesting rice. Bailey described how Malays in the Lingga area gave up rice-cultivation for collecting and fishing, finding the task easier and more pleasant (SG 2 June, No. 437, 1902). Sometimes rice has been neglected to the extent that crops are lost, as one Resident complained: "What I feared might happen has come to pass, the padi having been deserted by the Dyaks for the easily collected and remunerative engkabang crop, with the result that the majority of the Dyaks are short of rice and will have to obtain their supplies from other sources. They have plenty of money and will be able to obtain supplies. . . "SG A A 1 August, No. 839, 1923). Critics of Ibans who favor collecting over rice-cultivation fail to note that the rewards of the former are much more certain at the times when produce is available.

A A [Sarawak Gazette--Analyst]

2. Value of New Land

Implicit in the population pressures was a second factor, the obverse of the first, the Iban cultural value of new land. The Ibans are themost expansive and aggressive of the indigenous peoples of Sarawak. The institution of pejalai included, among other purposes such as the validation of the Iban male, the reconnitering of new lands and other people. In one account,[11] two brothers, Baji and Tagi', sons of Baring, on a pejalai from the Skrang, made a bark canoe (utap),[12] and travelled down the Kanowit. Coming out onto the broad expanse of the Rajang, they were astounded to find how flat the land was. They travelled as far as Bukit Lan below Sibu, then returned to bring their families to the land just waiting for the taking.

3. The Pioneer

A third factor, related to the migrations and high value of new land in Iban culture, was the traditional class system. More will be said of this ina a later chapter, but contrary to what Freeman has written about the Ibans of the Sut, the Ibans in the Sibu District had a well-developed class consciousness, which still obtains among them, particularly in the arrangement of marriages. During the nineteenth century, the pioneer (ke mubok menoa baru, "who opens up new land")

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[11] Interview with Tuai Rumah Ampan, 16 November, 1970.

[12] Such craft are still occasionally made for trips from headwaters, and abandoned after a single trip.

thereby achieved distinction for himself and secured land-rights for his descendants. Land was power, and latecomers had to make requests for land from the descendants of the pioneers. The climb to the position of aristocrat (raja berani, "brave and rich") had to commence with pioneering. The names of pioneers who opened up new territories are still remembered by their descendants,[13] as well as the feats they accomplished and their nom de guerre. In one account,

> "The first Ibans to move to Sarikai were led by Nuga (Who Cut Off The Rejand Tidal Bore) who settled at Sari'. When (Pengulu) Abas heard that Nuga was at Sari', he walked overland from Paku' to Selalang, and urged Nuga to cross the Rejang. 'We can't,' replied Nuga,' for the Beliun (Melanau), occupy that land, and we can't fight Tugau.' Nevertheless, at Abas' insistence, they crossed over and drove out the Melanaus, who scattered to Oya, Mukah, Balingian and Bintulu."[14]

The high degree of consonance between narratives related by informants in the Second and Third Divisions supports the credibility of

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[13] which tends to be confusing because of the plethora of names, but therein illustrates the abundance and independence of movements that took place. (Tuai Rumah Ampan, 23 October, 1970).

[14] Text: Ke mula mula ia Iban datai di Sarikai, Nuga, ensumbar ia, Mantap Bena Pangka Pasang, ka diau di Sari. Ninga Nuga udah di Sari, Abas bedarat ari Paku ka Selalang, ngumbok Nuga ngelayang Batang Rejang. Batang Rajang enda ulih dipelanggang laban di-uan Beliun, ko Nuga, lalu kitai enda te-alah ka Tugau. Tang, diumbok Abas, saduai ngalah ka Beliun ka rari ngagai Oya, Mukah, Balingian enggau Bintulu.

• 423 Traditionally, the Ibans and other indigenes maintained that land was held with usufruct rights in perpetuity by the descendants of the pioneer who cleared the land, or persons to whom they gave [671] usufruct rights. Under Iban adat, such land could not be alienated by Government nor acquired by squatters, such as the Chinese. Whether or not the land was used, they still maintained usufruct rights to it.

175 177 The Third Division reports of the first three decades of this century contain numerous accounts of land disputes, caused by Chinese encroachment on what appeared to them to be empty land.[47] In some cases, the Chinese rented land from the Ibans, for example, in the Assan opposite Pengulu Abas' house (SG No. 817, 1 October, 1921). In other instances, the saw "empty" land and took it over (SG No. 862, 1 July, 1925), resulting in complaints that,

> "Foochow Chinese are encroaching on their land at Sungei Merah; the matter will be looked into."

In still other situations, the Ibans,

> "agreed to give Chinese 300 acres at Rantau Panjang for farming purposes."

In some cases, however, hostilities broke out between the Ibans who resented the invasions of the Chinese, and the newcomers.

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[47] See, for example, SG No. 441, 1902-201; No. 419, 1907-124; No. 813, 1921-111; No. 862, 1925-169; No. 880, 1927-15; No. 918, 1930-75; No. 840, 1932; No. 1002, 1937-74; No. 1331, 1969-13-15.

671 178 Sarawak has noted,

> ". . .The adat of Sarawak is neither simple nor straight forward and is not to be traced to any one source. . . Adat has remained adat in its pure form, a rule of tradition to be found only in the mind of society."

657 [671] The codification of Iban adat was consonant with the policy of indirect rule which was followed into the colonial era. For it permitted the Governments, Brooke and British, to select and support those features of adat that were congenial with their purposes and make them normative through implementation by Government-endorsed leaders.[19]

6. Legitimization of Land Holdings

423 [177] An important aspect of Iban adat which underwent radical change was that dealing with land tenure. As we have noted, traditionally, a pioneer and his descendants claimed usufruct rights to land cleared for cultivation. Just as individuals claimed rights over land they had cleared and farmed (temuda'), so, also, longhouse communities claimed customary rights over sites of longhouses built and deserted (tembawai). 657 423 Brooke restraint of Iban migrations and encouragement of Chinese group immigration created a situation which resulted in the enactment of many land laws, which, though by intent were designed to protect the indigenes from the Chinese, resulted in a new context to which traditional adat had to be adjusted, and a demographic pattern unlike any other area of Sarawak.

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[19] This also permitted the rationalization of Government's paternalistic interference.

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6 Sibu

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657 The Second Rajah was determined to promote Chinese group immigration, for the economic development of the lower Rejang. Despite early indications to the contrary, he was convinced that any problems over land between the Chinese and other ethnic groups could be resolved. His view that there was empty land and plenty for all was essentially true,[20] but as we have described in Chapter One, much land remains empty because it is infertile, inaccessible, or both. As Pringle succinctly puts it:

> ". . .As a matter of practical fact, there is frequently not enough usable land for all, and since World War II this effective shortage has been a growing cause of political tension."

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423 Land disputes between Chinese and Ibans began in the first year of the Foochow arrivals, and were a continuous source of conflict between the persons involved as well as to Government. The disputes reached a climax in the "Binatang Disputes of 1925,"[21] but tensions over land and the inadequacy of existing land laws continue to vex Government today.

The problems that arose were in part technical, in part cultural, and involved the two groups' use and attitudes towards land. The Chinese, coming from the overpopulated southeastern provinces of China, saw the

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[20] An estimated three-quarters of Sarawak is still virgin forest (Annual Report, 1963:49).

[21] See, "The Binatang Land Disputes, 1925," SG, No. 1331, 1969: 13-15.

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6
Sibu

197 largely unsettled areas of the Rejang as land opened for occupation
423 and cultivation. The land which the Ibans had cleared already of virgin jungle with large trees and covered with secondary growth, looked especially appealing. What they did not understand and, surprisingly, what the Rajah would not comprehend, was the Iban attitude toward the land. The conflict basically was one between settlers whose farming techniques included the complete clearing and fertilization of land for permanent occupation and continuous cultivation, and shifting cultivators, whose techniques included clearing land sufficiently to plant rice amidst the stumps for one or two years, then moving on, but claiming usufruct rights in perpetuity[22] and assuming responsibilities to the spirits of those who had invested their energies and lives in the land.[23]

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[654] [22] A recent incident involved an Iban who claimed damages for loss of fruit trees cut down by a Government survey team on land he inherited but has not developed and has not seen in five years.

[23] "In my experience the administrator discussing land rights with a peasant is usually talking at cross purposes; for the former "my land" implies a personal individual form of tenure, for the latter it may involve a host of obligations towards abstrusely connected relatives not to mention their ancestral spirits. It seems to me altogether too much to suppose that the enterprising Iban who acquires registered land in a native area [113] suddenly adjusts his legal notions to those of the Land Office." (Leach, "Land and Custom," SG No. 1073, 1 August, 1947).

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In the Second Rajah's attempt to resolve the land disputes, he set aside land on both sides of the Rejang for a distance of twelve miles below Sibu for Chinese settlers, requiring all non-Chinese to move immediately from the area. Describing this action by the Rajah, James Hoover wrote:

> "From the very beginning land disputes arose between the colonists and the natives so that something had to be done to define the boundaries of the colony. On one of the late Rajah's (Charles Brooke) visits he called into the local fort (Sibu) the head men of the Chinese, Malays, and Dayaks, and said to them: 'This colony is here. We will not discuss whether it is a good thing or not, but since it is here, and there is abundant land for everybody in this district, I am going to set aside certain areas for the Foochows, out of which they will not be allowed to settle, and into which no others will be allowed to go. All Dayaks, Malays and others now living in this area must move out at once.' He then had a large map hung on the wall, and he himself with a blue pencil marked points on the river bank showing the extent of the grants."

The Rajah's designation of certain areas for Chinese in no way solved the problems, and complaints of their encroachments onto in-

425 digenes' lands continued. His conviction that drawing out lines of settlement would keep the groups apart was naive, for it did not reckon with the Chinese farmers' desire for more land, or with the indigenes' willingness to sell any and all land if the price seemed right to them. A further practical problem was that no means existed for adequate supervision of the settlements of the Chinese immigrants and their cultivation, so that Government had no way of knowing whether they trespassed onto

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6
Sibu

other land than that granted them.[24]

The continuing disputes between Chinese and non-Chinese in the lower Rejang resulted in the promulgation of a number of land laws, aimed at protecting the indigenes from the Chinese.[25] Out-stations of the Land and Survey Department were established to carry out surveys and to establish property boundaries as well as to enforce land regulations. Although the Second Rajah assumed that his intimate knowledge of the Ibans served in his preservation of their "nativeness," yet the laws he instituted and the boundaries he drew around the various ethnic groups had far-reaching effects in the life of the Ibans. That these laws contravened the adat which was a part of the traditional Iban life as the Rajah perceived it, goes without saying.[26] His restraint

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[24] "Owing to the lack of a proper Land Department at Sibu, with consequently no surveys, land grants have been issued promiscuously in the past." (SG No. 804, 1 November, 1920).

[25] The most important land laws are those enacted in 1931 and 1933, on which present regulations are based.

[26] Writing on the bind Government officers find themselves in between land regulations and adat, F.R.K.K. warns that "much harm in land affairs (can be done) by rigourously following our existing land laws. . . We very much doubt whether the axiom in the 1939 Secretariat circular, 'Removal to another district automatically extinguishes all rights of user' is in every case in accordance with the customary law of a particular community. In fact, natives do change their abode, arrange for someone to look after their land and return afterwards to enjoy the benefit of the land. Again, the injunction, 'no community may hold up land in excess of requirements,' (who is to determine the 'requirements'?) ("Customary Land Tenure," SG No. 1130, 31 May, 1952).

195 of their migrations, encouragement of rubber planting, and establish-
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423 ment in the Land and Survey Department of an external authority to validate land tenure radically changed the social organization of the Ibans who responded to his Government, as they became sedentary and
[193] oriented to a cash economy. The practice of preserving lengthy genealogies for validating land holdings, typical of shifting cultivators, is virtually extinct among Sibu Ibans, for authority now is invested in the surat tanah ("land letter"). Although not all land in the District is held under permit or has been surveyed, yet there is none that can be described as unclaimed or undesignated on land maps.

7. Protector of Resources

The development of Sibu as a center for the administration of
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657 resources included the establishment of the Forest Department in 1919. The Department has responsibility for the constitution and administration of various categories of forests, for example, those that may be exploited by timber companies and those that may not be.

The florescence of the timber industry in the late 1940's and
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657 from the 1950's on, required overall supervision to insure against the
313 indiscriminate felling of forests. Of concern to the Ibans were those forests that were important to them for the wood for their longhouses and the products that they collected for sale. The rapidly expanding timber operations struck fear among many Ibans that the forests and

197 of estates that are brought to the District Office for probate. Although
428 as one informant stated this is relatively new and not many Ibans are
657 aware of p'robit (v.f. m'ribit), yet in figures available, Iban estates accounted for almost one-third of those probated in Sibu. For example, in 1952, Iban estates numbered 37 of a total of 105 probated (see Table 11 on page 167). This development is due to several factors. First is the Iban principle of partible inheritance. With the exception of smoked head (antu pala'), all other objects in a bilik may be divided among the heirs. Usually, division is made between the heirs or, if they fail to agree on the division, the tuai rumah may be asked to determine the share of each heir. Second, as already noted, as the Ibans moved into the Sibu District, they planted rubber gardens and began the cultivation of swamp rice, with a resulting sedentariness. Instead of cultivating and moving on, as had been their practice, they invested time, energy
175 and money in the development of their lands. Third, with the Chinese
423 immigrations reaching flood proportions by the mid-1920's, it became expedient if not imperative for Ibans to acquire O.T's ("Occupation Tickets") to guarantee their rights to farmlands and rubber gardens. Without an O.T., an Iban faced possible litigation over land to which he claimed usufruct rights, but to which a Chinese had been granted a temporary title.[30]

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[30] In 1925, when 4,000 Chinese immigrants arrived in Sibu, a total of 3,100 temporary titles or O.T.'s were issued for "newly opened land," much of which was still claimed by Ibans as it had been farmed recently by them. This was a prime cause of the "Binatang Disputes of 1925" (SCG 16 August, 1926, see also SG No. 1331, 1969: 13-15).
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243 621 [423] avoid possible conflicts due to overlapping claims to the same ancestral lands. Further, if a member of the house who has moved away to another longhouse because of marriage (nguai), or for some other reason has been away, wants to activate his rights to farm land claimed by his natal [427] bilik, he may do so at that time. Although renting land is not common, it does occur and a token fee of one pasu of padi per acre is charged cf. Freeman 1955:147-8).

243 716 [221] The annual meeting is held at about the end of April, after the previous year's crop has been brought to the house and stored. At that meeting, the date for the Gawai Batu ("Festival of the Whetstone") is set, and the members of the community begin preparations (nengkira) by cooking tuak ("rice wine"), collection and purchase of food, and the inviting of guests. The purpose of the Gawai Batu is to assure a good harvest in the new year.

[412] A ritual center (pandong) is made on each family's ruai, with the whetstone (batu ansah), tools to be used in farming such as weeding knives (ilok), knives (duku'), hoes (changkul), sickles (pitu'), and axes (kapak), together with baskets of seed (benih), wrapped in a woven blanket (pua' kumbu').

243 621 796 At the meeting held to plan the gawai, each tuai bilik states which guests his family will invite. Generally, all members of nearby houses will be invited, while only a few selected friends from more distant houses will be asked to attend. However, if members of the house

314 Malanus who manufacture sago flour (cf. Morris, 1964). Sago palms are
231 held by Iban families under customary rights. The trunk of the palm is
423 sawed into 30 inch lengths, split and rasped (diparut) for pig fodder.
262 Sago also is eaten as a rice substitute when the rice supply is exhausted
342 and Ibans have no money with which to buy more.[20] In the Middle Rejang and its tributaries, where the nipa palm does not grow, the leaves of
757 the sago palm (daun mulong) are used for thatching and coverings. The sago nut (buah mulong) is a part of Iban pharmacology, being highly astringent and used in the treatment of diarrhea.

285 Numerous reeds grow both in low-lying and higher land, and are
314 collected for the manufacture of mats and baskets by women. The reeds
462 (ui, purun, bemban) are cut and taken to the longhouse where they are
412 alternately dried and soaked until the outer covering (kulit) can be cut away (disimu', dilit) with a sharp, long-handled knife (lungga). The species bemban is the most valuable because it requires great attention in preparation for weaving. It is exposed to dew (diperambun) for five to seven nights in order to achieve the prized lightness of color. If rain falls the bemban is quickly retrieved by the women for rain will blacken the bemban. The weaving of baskets and mats is done by women on the longhouse ruai or covered common verandah. In addition to the

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[20] A period that is described colorfully but dreadfully as maya bulan gantong sendok, "when the rice-ladle hangs (empty over the pot)."

000 and relived in many an evening's rendau ruai.

• 423 621 The longhouse remains the jural residence of its members even though they may be working and residing eleven months of the year in another area. Through maintenance of the jural residence in the longhouse to which he is affiliated, a member retains his share of rights in the communal building site as well as referents to any private land-holdings which may have been divided to him as a member of his natal bilik, or lands which he may have purchased. In the event of land disputes, he will call upon the tuai rumah and tuai bilik to attest to his rights. Other property disputes, inter-familial cases or disagreements between members of different longhouse communities are adjudicated by the tuai rumah or, in the event that he is unable to settle a case to the satisfaction of the parties involved, by the pengulu. Thus, it is recognized that wisdom decrees alignment with a longhouse for support when disputes arise.

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Rationale for Longhouse Residence

829 621 Most Ibans of the senior generation, i.e., forty years and older, agree that the longhouse is the place for Ibans to live. In an interview, this viewpoint was articulated at length by one informant who, ironically, has lived in Sibu since the mid-1950's, while keeping a bilik in his longhouse.

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> "The longhouse is the proper residence. It is there that the young people are socialized, learn the ways of us Iban, and develop respect for our laws and customs (adat chara). Those who haven't lived in the longhouse are not really Ibans - they are a mixture, part Malay, part Chinese, part European, and a little Iban.

361 himself.
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Several other instances of the physical fragmentation of longhouses have occurred within the District. At Rumah Nangkai, Batang Pasai, there no longer is a longhouse but an aggregate of individual dwellings built along the rising ground where the former longhouse stood. When Rumah Tindit, Oya Road, broke up in 1962, some of the members joined together to build a new longhouse at a new site. Others, however, such as Entili, chose to build separate houses along the Road in the vicinity of the 15th Mile.

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One man stated that Government has encouraged the dissolution of longhouses for several reasons. Among these are concerns over health and fire, for when illness or fire strike a house, it may sweep through the entire community. But more important in the Government's mind is the delicate problem of land-reform, an unresolved and highly critical issue that contributed to the fall of one Chief Minister and an unwillingness by the Alliance Coalition to deal with it. Under Iban adat, former longhouse sites (tembawai) are held in perpetuity by members and their descendants so long as they continue to constitute a longhouse community. When they dissolve their community, however, all rights to the tembawai are relinquished and the land reverts to the State. The difficulties of keeping track of claims to long-abandonded house-sites are obvious, and a problem Government could solve through the fragmentation of those communities near the roads.

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343 the layout of the settlements. In the case of Rumah Gaong, Enchul has [231] built a cattle-shed for his 15 head of cattle, a watering pond, and [491] garage-storage shed two miles distance from Rumah Gaong and at the end of the three mile road which he had extended into his property from the Durin Road.

361 Site plans for Rumah Nyala and Rumah Gaong are included on the following pages to indicate visually the relative positions of the buildings in the settlements.

D. Land Tenure and Use

● 423 To describe the Ibans as a land-hungry people is no misstatement. [181] Previously, they desired new land for the practice of shifting cultivation. Today, many realize the economic potential of land on a highly inflated market, and some are sellers, other speculators.

The movements of various groups of Ibans into the Sibu District were similar in the practices and principles followed in use and tenure. When members of a community entered a new area, they discussed and decided among themselves how much land would be needed by each family involved. Each family in turn was allotted the amount agreed upon-ten fathoms, twenty fathoms - on the water's edge, and then the distance cleared from the river depended upon the labor-force and industry of each family. But, one principle that was firmly applied was that each unit had to clear straight away from the river and parallel to families on either side. It may be imagined that this gave rise to a number of land cases in which the issue

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 339]

423 of determining who was clearing straight away was at stake. Again, it was not uncommon for a shrewd farmer, seeing a desirable plot of land, to cut across another's path. Boundaries were marked by stumps (tunggul), jack-fruit trees, or in the case of swampy areas, by planting bamboo.[5]

423 691 Even more frequently, litigations have taken place over attempts to sell communal forest tracts (tanah kampong) by individuals in cases of [671] [621] "claim jumping." By adat all members of a longhouse community holding rights to a forest reserve are to share equally in any profit from the sale of timber rights.

423 654 Families or individuals hold usufruct rights to land cleared by their ancestors, or land purchased through monetary payment to others holding such rights. Most land held is registered with the Land and Survey Department, which functions to protect the rights to land both of communities and individuals. Only a small portion of the land in the Third Division, however, has been surveyed, owing to the size of the area, small work-force, and reluctance of land-holders to pay survey fees. And, in some cases where land has been surveyed and property rights established, the markers (pak tanah) have been removed or individuals have planted fruit trees on the surveyed property, demanding payment for their "losses" when the owners pressed their titles.

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[539] [5] Taja' jalai nya bingkok, ia enda tau enda dititih-arus. Tunggul buah temedak selalu digalau di antara. Buloh ditanam didijir. ("Though the way may be crooked, it must be followed.")

311 The pattern of land use varies considerably in each community, depending upon the amount and type of land available. At Rumah Nyala, Sungai Aup, the lower-lying land on the eastern bank of the Aup has been developed into sawah. The higher ground on the western side of the river has been planted with rubber and fruit trees. Closer to the longhouse, coconuts, areca-nuts, and other fruit trees flourish. At Rumah Gaong, Sungai Sengan, farm-lands are not so concentrated and are located at
654 distances up to one-hour's walk from the house. Members of the community have been recipients of Government schemes for pepper and cocoa, and most families have 300 or more pepper plants on hilly, well-drained clay soils. Tuai Rumah Gaong has planted four-dozen cocoa bushes, some of which have borne and the fruit processed for drinking. He also has participated in the Rubber Planting Scheme, obtaining budded rubber from the Agriculture Department to replace his old, low-yielding variety.

● 423 Land was equally divided among the members of a community, and rights were established through eminent domain. Land rights were guarded by the gerontocratic rule of the elders. When disputes arose, they were adjudicated,

> [622] "by boundary markers such as trees and stumps and according to who came first. Therefore, the tuai rumah also was the tuai menoa (area elder), for he who came first certainly knew the comings and the clearings. Formerly, people depended on genealogies [178] and kin-groups, but now, on lawyers."

Land may be divided into two sub-categories: land held by individuals and their family units, and land the rights to which are shared

● 423 by the community.

423 621 In the latter case, communal land consists of the land on which the longhouse is built (taba' rumah), and an area extending twenty fathoms around the house (payong rumah). Of the payong rumah, Richards writes that,

> "a space all round the house 20 fathoms is to be called by the payong rumah and may not be claimed by an individual. Permission to plant anything in that space must first be sought and obtained from the Tuai Rumah. Each house may set aside for itself a greater area than this if it is so agreed among its members."

Former longhouse sites (tembawai) also are considered communal land rights are administered by the tuai rumah, on behalf of his constituents. Occasionally, attempts by individuals to claim such land for sale or use has resulted in litigations.

423 A person maintains more or less permanent rights of usufruct to land held by his natal bilik. As expressed by one tuai rumah,

> "A person's rights (kuasa, lit., power) to land can't be (simply) discarded, even if he leaves his father and mother. The person who takes up post-marital residence with his spouse always take rights to land, jars, blankets as symbols of his family's support. If he wants to surrender his rights, he can turn them over to his sibling(s) and receive in turn the token payment of a chicken, one pasu of padi and $3 (Bayar Tungkus Asi, "Payment of Rice Wrapping"). But, if the person wants to return to farm on the land of his natal bilik, he tells his family and tuai rumah, and if no resident of the natal bilik has declared his intention to farm the land, the former may do so."

OCO political potential under the traditional system, acculturation has made

000 many Ibans aware and quick to take advantage of the opportunity to sell land. Coffeeshop deals are made between Ibans looking for profit through the acquisition and sale of land.

Although much land has been sold to Chinese, some Ibans have been
• 423
432 farsighted in realizing the value of land speculation, and have brought up or arranged for the exchange of land from their fellows. For example, by their own statement, Enchul and Embuas anak Imba have gone together to purchase all land to a depth of two lots on either side of Durin Road from the 5½ to the 8½ Mile.

There is a positive correlation between the amount of land avail-
423
621 able to members of a longhouse, the length of the longhouse, the economic potential, and the political clout of the house. The more land claimed by the pioneers, the more members likely to attach themselves to that house for the land. As one man stated the case,

> "Whoever came first took over much land and in doing so established usufruct rights for his descendants. Others who came in would attach themselves to the original pioneers and their descendants for allocations of land.
>
> "Land was power -it still is - but when this area was opened up, men claimed all of the land for so many promontories between their house and the next, for they realized that land is food, hence, power."

Pioneers and their descendants, those who had prior claim to the
423
554 land, were those from whom land was requested. Those who gave permission to use land were the ones who received loyalties and support.

A, [This paragraph is repeated, including its missing beginning, as paragraph 2 on page 343.--Analyst]

423 691 Litigations about land between members of the same house are settled by the tuai rumah. If they are not satisfied with the settlement, they may make an apil ("appeal") to the pengulu, who will investigate the case.

423 177 Just as land was recognized for its economic and political potential under the traditional system, acculturation has made many Ibans aware and quick to take advantage of the opportunity to sell land. Coffee-shop deals are made between Ibans looking for profit through the acquisition and sale of land.

E. Physical Layout of Household

342 621 "The most salient characteristic of Iban social organization is the practice of long-house domicile" (Freeman 1970:1). The Iban long-house is an attenuated structure comprised of a number of independently owned family units, ranging from five to seventy units. The length of the longhouse at a particular given time depends upon several factors, among them the amount of land available to new members who want to attach onto the house, the age and quality of the house, and kin- or friendship ties with members of the house.

Although the longhouse may appear to be a single structural unit, it is in fact an aggregate of independently owned family units. The materials used in the construction of the individual units of the longhouse reflect this independent character, and in the same house building materials may vary from split bamboo flooring to hardwood planks, roofing of nipa-

369 In several visits to the now-razed Rumah Temuai ("Guest House"), I discovered that only those Iban who knew no single persons in Sibu stayed there. Some were there to visit sick relatives in the hospital, others were working temporarily or more permanently and saving money by living in the 369 Rumah Temuai. But as soon as they could find other lodging that their 574 resources permitted them to rent, or made acquaintances with whom they could "take shelter" (numpang), they moved out to take up other accommondations and from then on, were open to demands for hospitality from kinsmen and friends.

369 A vast majority of Iban residents in the Sibu Urban area live either 362 in rented quarters or in housing furnished by the employer. Seventy-three 427 of the Iban employees in our sample listed in Table 15 (page 197) live in [466] quarters provided by their employer. Forty-seven of these employees are renting rooms, and 22 indicated that they are living with friends or kins- [423] men in one of these two groups. It is significant that only nine of the 171 economically active Ibans in Sibu own their own homes, and all of these nine have been long-time residents of the town, and generally they are more affluent than those living in rented quarters or those furnished by the employer.

361 There is no "Iban Ward" of Sibu Urban area, the Iban population 369 being scattered from Sungai Antu to Upper Lanang Road. The heaviest concentrations tend to be at the Lanang Road Field Force Camp, where an average 1,000 members, mostly Iban, live with their families; at Sungai Antu

175 At the beginning of this century, recognizing that they were here
361 to stay, Ibans in the Bawang Assan area constructed the first permanent
342 longhouse in memory, the rumah papan ("house of planks"). Previously,
178 house construction had been predicated upon the frequent movements of the shifting cultivators, and was of an impermanent nature. Sedentary settlements of Iban groups have been marked by the erection of substantial longhouses. Although the future of the longhouse domicile may be in question, Iban house-types, whether individual dwelling or attenuated structure, are permanent buildings.

654 A radically new concept of land tenure resulted from the establish-
423 ment of the Lands and Survey Department which claimed the right to re-
177 gister land and to issue permits and titles. In Iban polity land was held under usufruct rights by descendants of a pioneer who cleared it. Land disputes were settled within the longhouse community by appeal to senior members or others who were familiar with migrations and genealogies. Setting up a department to handle land matters represented an incursion of external authority into Iban society, the erosion of traditional polity, and the orientation of its members to the Opis Lan Ensabi as the locus of power in land matters.

177 The Second Rajah's encouragement of Chinese trade and immigration
657 helped to produce a situation he wanted to avoid, in which sociocultural change has taken place among the Ibans. The frequent contacts and long associations of Ibans with Chinese and Malays have led to social and